

**SOCIALIST STUDIES**

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## **SOCIALISM NEEDS YOU! AND YOU NEED SOCIALISM!**

### **The Problem**

Without Socialists there can be no Socialist political organisation and no Socialism. The Socialist Party of Great Britain needs members in order to carry out Party work. We need writers, speakers and distributors of our journal, *Socialist Studies*, and other Party literature. We need committed Socialists who reject capitalism and accept the urgent need for a new society based upon production for direct social use, not for profit. And we need members who accept and will be prepared to defend the SPGB's Object and Declaration of Principles.

### **The Solution**

The solution is simple. If you agree with our analysis of capitalism, the Socialist objective and the political means required to establish common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society, then you are already a Socialist. But individual Socialists cannot alone make a marked impact upon Capitalism. The struggle for Socialism has to be an organised one and this requires collective action by the working class.

This is why a Socialist political party is vitally important. It focuses attention on the class struggle and enables workers to act with unity and strength. If you are a Socialist then the first step is to join the Socialist Party of Great Britain. We are not a sect or a cult. There are no intellectuals in the Party, only intelligent men and women who share the same class interests, Socialist ideas and Socialist objective. However, we only want members who agree with the Socialist case and if you do agree with us then we want you as a member.

### **What Next?**

If you agree with the Socialist case then the next step is to apply for membership. We have no leaders. No one will tell you what to do and to think. All we expect is political commitment and enthusiasm to work with other Socialists to achieve the establishment of Socialism. Joining the Socialist Party of Great Britain will be the single most important political decision you will make. One more Socialist is one less worker voting for capitalist parties like Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. A Socialist party with a growing membership will make an increasing impact on the political class struggle. If you want a world without unemployment, exploitation, war, poverty, discomfort and inequality you should seriously consider joining us. **ALL ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP** to the Socialist Party of Great Britain, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N22 7NU. Tel: 0203 281 1111. Email: [enquiries@spgb.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@spgb.org.uk) (e-mail).

## THE WAR IN IRAQ: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

### It is all about oil

During the war in Afghanistan, Harold Evans, former editor of the **Sunday Times**, and Anne McElvoy, the **Independent**, columnist, asked those who opposed the war in Afghanistan: "*what would you do when faced with terrorism*"? Both claimed not to hear an answer. The same question has been put to those who oppose the war in Iraq.

One reason for this "*silence*" is that Socialists are not allowed to state in the media the Socialist case against war. Pro-war journalists would not hear an answer to their question because the newspaper owners and their editors prevented them and the readers from hearing one.

In Canada, for example, Canwest, owned by Israel Asper, owns over 130 newspapers, including 14 city dailies and one of the country's largest papers, the National Post. His kept-journalists have attacked anyone who dares to criticise the State terrorism of Israel against the Palestinians (**Independent** 17 December 2002). When the US anti-war campaigner, Noam Chomsky, recently spoke to a packed audience at St Paul's Cathedral against the US's proposed war against Iraq there was a news black-out. Newspapers are full of the drip-drip of propaganda emanating from the White House and Westminster. Most journalists believe everything and question nothing. They are "*on-message and on-side*".

Political extremists like the Libertarian Alliance and the Washington-based Heritage Institute have open access to the BBC to put their case for supporting capitalism or bombing countries back to the Stone Age. But when it comes to Socialist ideas the drawbridge goes up. Greg Dyke, the Director General, claims that he wants to be "*inclusive*" in giving political groups representation (the BNP had a lot of air time during the May 2001 local elections), but it

appears to be inclusive of everyone but the Socialist Party of Great Britain. The SPGB is not allowed to voice its opposition to the war in Iraq on any television news channel or radio programme.

Socialists are not invited to explain their unique principled opposition to war. We are not allowed to explain that the working class has no interest in war because they neither own and control the means of production and distribution nor own oil fields, trade routes and communication systems.

And we do have a case. There is evidence to support our argument that, like the previous Gulf war, a decade ago, this war is basically about the control of oil resources. Here is Robert Fisk, an American colleague of Ms McElvoy, a journalist who actually has been to the killing fields of Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. This is what he wrote about the "war on terror":

*"Across the former Soviet southern Muslim republics, America is building airbases, helping to pursue the "war on terror" against any violent Muslim Islamist groups that dare to challenge the local dictators. Please do not believe this is about oil. Do not for a moment think that these oil and gas-rich lands have any economic importance for the oil-fuelled Bush administration. Nor the pipelines that could run from northern Afghanistan to the Pakistani coast if only that pesky Afghan Iyia Jirga could elect a government that would give concessions to Unocal, the oddly named concession whose former boss just happens to be a chief Bush "adviser" to Afghanistan" (Independent, 25 May 2002).*

Now it is the oilfields in Iraq. Here is Robert Fisk again writing from the suburbs of Amman:

*"Every man in the room believed President Bush wanted Iraqi oil. Indeed, every Arab I have met wanted Iraqi oil. Indeed, every Arab I've met in the past six months believes this - and this alone - explains his enthusiasm for*



*invading Iraq. Many Israelis think the same. So do I. Once an American regime is installed in Baghdad, our companies will have access to 112 billion barrels of oil. With unproven reserves, we might actually end up controlling almost a quarter of the world's total reserves. And this forthcoming war isn't about oil?" (Independent, 18 January 2003).*

The importance of Iraqi oil is supported by oil experts. Iraq possesses the world's second-largest proven oil reserve, estimated at 112.5 billion barrels, or 11% of the world's total oil reserves. In addition, many oil analysts believe that Iraq has massive untapped reserves, putting it nearly on a par with Saudi Arabia. Iraq's oil is also high quality and very inexpensive to produce. According to one industry expert: "*There is not an oil company in the world that doesn't have its eye on Iraq*" (**Foreign Policy in Focus**, September 2002).

If you look at the statistics on the ratio of reserve to oil production - the number of years the reserves of oil will last at current production rates - compiled by Jeremy Rifkin in **Hydrogen Economy**, in the US, where more than 60% of the recoverable oil has already been produced, the ratio is just 10 years, as it is in Norway. In Canada, it is 8:1. In Iran, it is 53:1; in Saudi Arabia 55:1; in the United Arab Emirates 75:1. In Kuwait, it's 116:1. But in Iraq, it's 526:1.

To repeat the sarcastic remark made by Robert Fisk "*And this forthcoming war isn't about oil?*".

Representatives of major US oil companies have been meeting with Iraqi opposition leaders. Ahmed Chalabi, leader of one of the main opposition groups, told the Washington Post that "*American companies will have a big shot at Iraqi oil*" (September 2002).

You will not, however, find many journalists in the main newspapers saying that the war in Iraq is a war about oil. Socialists are not given any forum

within the mass media to refute the arguments of our opponents. Socialists are not allowed to state our case in the media that the war in Iraq is about oil, that it is nothing about freedom and democracy or stopping the production of so-called "*weapons of mass destruction*". We are not allowed to tell the working class in the media that this war has nothing to do with their class interests. Workers have no country. They have no strategic points to protect, no resources to defend, no trade routes to fight over. In short, the conduits of communication through which Socialists can channel our Socialist ideas are severely limited. When Socialists face the capitalist media it is like spitting into the wind.

### **Workers have no country for which to fight**

Of course the question posed by Evans and McElvoy can be traced back to George Orwell. Orwell asked those who opposed the Second World War what would they do if the Germans invaded Britain? For Socialists at the time the answer was to carry on putting the case for Socialism as best as possible. For, unlike Orwell who erroneously believed he had a stake in British capitalism, Socialists knew they had no country to fight for.

This did not stop the journalist D J Taylor trying to rephrase Orwell's remarks for a post-September 11 world. He wrote:

*If your enemy is prepared to use terrorist tactics to blow up thousands of innocent civilians, what steps are you prepared to take in your defence? If in addition, your country harbours thousands of citizens who actively support this action, what are you going to do about it? These, you feel, are the kinds of questions Orwell would have been asking last autumn, and it is worth pointing out that no-one on the anti-war left has yet got round to answering them" (New Statesman, 20 May 2002).*

Well, Socialists had an answer in 1914 which we repeated (again) in September 1939, and one which we hold today.

*"Having no quarrel with the working class of any country, we extend to our fellow workers of all lands the expression of our goodwill and socialist fraternity, and pledge ourselves to work for the overthrow of capitalism and the triumph of Socialism."*

The main form of communication for Socialists is the written word. In our recent pamphlet *"Capitalism Causes War and Terrorism"* we set out the Socialist case against the war in Afghanistan. We showed that the US and its allies are part of the problem and not the solution. We would like to publicly debate with those who support the war in Iraq to show their lies, evasions and propaganda. We doubt if they would accept. Kept journalists are no more than political cowards.

While Socialists reject the use of individual terrorism we also oppose State terrorism. What the US and its allies inflicted on Afghanistan was State terrorism, an act of unmitigated barbarism, a warning of future wars if the working class does not fast establish Socialism. This same terrorism will be used again Iraq. Cluster bombs, daisy cutters and smart missiles will be unleashed in acts of terror killing men, women and children. The aim will be to demoralise and terrorise the population. Civilian death and destruction will be written off as *"collateral damage"*. There will be lies about the missiles that go off target just as there were in other wars.

It is a mistake to suppose that you can have capitalism without war and terrorism. You cannot have poison without the effects of poison. You cannot have capitalism without the effects of capitalism.

The question posed by Evans and McElvoy presumes that Western capitalism holds some moral high ground to which we should all defer. This is

Capitalism is turned into a Western where the good guys (US and Britain) wear the white hat and get the girl while the Taliban and Bin Laden are the baddies who wear the black hats and don't shave.

Socialists draw no moral distinction between one capitalist country and another. They all have killing machines and capitalist politicians ready to use them. When George Bush asserts "*you are either for the coalition against terrorism or against*", Socialists say we are against both the State terrorism of George Bush and the private terrorism of Bin Laden and his supporters. Equally, we have no illusions about the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, but we know that it is not democracy the US wants when it calls for a "*regime change*" in Iraq but access and control over the oilfields.

Socialists do not take sides in disputes between different sections of the capitalist class. Bush, like administrations before him, wants to secure oil interests for the US. It is no secret. In a congressional testimony in 1999, General Anthony Zinni, then commander of the US Central Command which includes the Middle East and Central Asia, stated (April 13) that the Gulf Region, with its huge oil reserves, is a "*vital interest*" of "*long standing*" for the US, and that the US "*must have free access to the region's resources*". That was the position of the US government in 1999, before Bush became President, and his long term connection with the oil companies who helped finance his election campaign means that it is their interests which dominate US foreign policy.

The Western Alliance is part of the problem in a world divided up into competing nation states constantly at odds with each other. The US spends 40% of the total expenditure of "*defence*" in the world, some \$36 bn (Observer, 10 February 2002). American capitalism has to protect its interests. It wants to remain top dog. And that interest is best served by having the most sophisticated, hi-tech, mass killing armaments possible, to give it an overwhelming advantage over other rival nation states.



## Work for Socialism!

So why do Socialists urge workers not to get involved in the disputes of the capitalist class and their political agents? We offer three reasons.

First, terrorism, national conflict and war are caused by capitalism. Capitalism is about competition, the drive for profit and the exploitation of the world's working class. Until you confront and tackle the capitalist cause the problem remains. This applies to terrorism and war just as it applies to poverty and unemployment.

Second, the working class do not own raw resources, strategic points of influence and trade routes. They have nothing to fight over. Owning no means and methods of production, to quote the **Communist Manifesto**, "*workers have no country*". All workers possess is their ability to sell their labour power or ability to work on the market for a wage or a salary. Workers in Britain, therefore, have more in common with workers in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya than they do with the owners of the **Sunday Times**, **Independent**, **The Observer** or the **New Statesman**. Workers have no national enemy, only a class enemy.

And third, working class consciousness and internationalism are not helped by the divisiveness of nationalism, always aggravated in times of war. It is precisely because the working class bear the brunt of capitalism's problems that they should become Socialists. This can only be achieved by persuasion. To abolish capitalism requires the conscious political action of a Socialist majority. You cannot force workers to become Socialists. Yet the consequences of workers not becoming Socialists is continued conflict, terrorism and war.

Terrorism is generated by capitalism. War is caused by capitalism. While capitalism remains, social reforms to prevent conflict will fail. The failure of

the United Nations as an institution designed to prevent war is demonstrated by the fact that it is itself involved in war, as it was in the Korean War, long ago.

For Socialism to be possible there first has to exist a class conscious Socialist majority who actively understand and desire Socialism. The function of Socialists is to make Socialists by presenting a practical case against capitalism. The first step is for workers to recognise why capitalism causes insoluble social problems like war and terrorism and why it can never be made to run in their interests. The second step is to take the necessary class conscious, democratic political action to replace capitalism with Socialism.

People who are at the forefront of urging a policy of war against terrorists are not those who have to fight. When asked to fight for his beliefs during the war in Serbia, the journalist, David Aaronovitch, a Tony Blair cheerleader at the **Independent**, constantly refused. He didn't mind supporting other people doing the killing and he did not have to clear up the mess of dead men, women and children referred to euphemistically as "*collateral damage*". Journalists and politicians cheer on "*surgical strikes*" from the safety of their armchairs. They enjoy war by proxy.

So what should a worker reply if he or she is asked "*what would you do*"? The action of any reasonable worker reflecting on their own class interests should be to say "*I will work for Socialism*". The aim of our propaganda is to help in that political process.

### History Repeating Itself

"Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators. Your wealth has been stripped off you by unjust men. The people of Baghdad shall flourish under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws" (General F S Maude, Commander of British Forces in Iraq, 1917).

## CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE POLITICS OF SOCIALISM

Obviously, the world we live in could be a lot better. Most political parties put forward proposals for making things better while retaining the capitalist system which is the cause of our problems.

That capitalist system is based on the wages system, with production for profit, goods being produced for sale rather than to satisfy people's needs. It is driven by the exploitation of the working class - the vast majority of people who, because we do not own the land or other means of producing or distributing wealth, must sell the only commodity of significant value we possess - our ability to work, our labour power.

Employers and employees, those who buy and those who sell labour power, have a constant ongoing conflict of interests, a class struggle, expressed in never ending disputes over wages, working conditions and hours. In addition to the industrial class struggle, Socialists argue that workers as a class need to raise their sights and organise to win the political class struggle as a precursor to establishing Socialism.

Through most of the 20th century, many workers mistakenly saw the Labour Party as standing for workers' interests by advocating reforms. The SPGB alone has always put Socialism, a system of society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community, as our sole demand. We do not seek support by advocating reforms or by protesting against specific evils of capitalism. Our protest is against the capitalist system itself since it is based on class exploitation through the wages system.

In spite of all the innumerable reforms of the last century, the working class are still stuck with much the same problems as if these reforms had never

happened - problems of unemployment and insecurity, poor housing and health, worry about how to care for our sick and elderly. Our earnings are mostly, only just enough to scrape by on. Those whose skills are in greater demand may call themselves "*middle class*", enjoy higher status and have a better standard of living, being able to afford comforts which most workers see as unaffordable luxuries. But even these "*middle class*" managers and professionals can lose their jobs. They too are part of the class which has to sell its labour power in order to live, the working class.

Whilst most of us must struggle to get by on our earnings, a tiny minority - the capitalist class - profit from our labours. This is a system where the minority who own the means for producing and distributing wealth are enriched, generation by generation, by their accumulation of capital derived from surplus value, the unpaid labour of successive generations of the working class.

As government statistics show "*only those whose wealth is greater than £500,000 (about 1 per cent of the population) hold more than their wealth in shares than any other form*" (Social Trends, 1996 edition, p113). Looked at from another angle, this turns into the statement that 99 per cent of the population get most of their income from sources other than investments. The situation in the US is very similar:

*"one per cent of the population owns about 4 trillion, repeat 4 trillion dollars' worth of property ... From a business point of view, few of us are in business. We are without capital. But with small exaggeration you can say that 10 per cent of the population more or less controls 100 per cent of the wealth. If the wage earner loses his or her job, the average family has enough money to last three months before it is tapped out".* (Nicholas von Hoffman, **Capitalist Fools**, 1993, p265).

The class system, class exploitation and class struggle: these were not invented by Marx. Like Marx, Socialists draw the conclusion that, since the capitalist system works against the interests of the working class, it is in our interests to unite to end this system, and the sooner the better.



## THE FIREMANS' STRIKE AND THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNT

During the firemen's strike last year a fireman, in a letter to the **Independent** (27 November 2002), made an extraordinary statement:

*"If socialism means anything for the union and the Government it means that we can resolve our differences without any further risk to the people we seek to protect".*

Socialism means the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society. It is a tragedy that the Fire Brigade Union and the other unions do not accept this meaning of Socialism. Yet the FBU still retains an absurd commitment to support the Labour Party and the Labour government.

The Labour Party, in and out of power, has never been, is not and never will be Socialist. Gordon Brown told the CBI at their conference that the Labour government was the party of enterprise, the party of capitalism.

The main thrust of Labour's "modernisation" plans for the Fire Service is to reduce the number of firemen, to create a more flexible workforce, to minimise costs and save money.

And in the class struggle there can be no resolution of differences between the working class on one side, and the employers and their government on the other. With enough force and resources at its disposal the government, like it did in previous lengthy strikes, will win out. Unions can never win long-drawn-out strikes.

In their use of strikes, workers need to recognise certain basic facts about capitalism: that (except on rare occasions when the government chooses to turn

a blind eye) the law will be enforced against strikers; that the unions' ability to halt production is of little use during a depression when employers are themselves restricting or halting it; and that the financial resources of the employers are much greater than those of the unions.

When the employers consider the issue of sufficient importance to warrant an all-out resistance, the unions cannot hope to win by an indefinite strike. Remember that it was the Labour government who used troops as strike breakers in the firemen's dispute of 1977-8 just as they did in November 2002.

Apart from the weakening of unions by long strikes which deplete their funds, there is the fact that any increase of pay that might eventually be gained has to be set against the loss of wages during the strike.

There is another problem with modern strikes. In the nineteenth century the suffering incidental to strike action was largely confined to the strikers and their families. In our own day the hardship and disruption increasingly extends to the whole working class. The government also has a greater command of the conduits of propaganda.

The fact that the whole working class is affected surely calls for recognition that the time is long overdue for workers to see the futility of prolonging the life of capitalism and to direct their efforts to the one worthwhile object, the establishment of Socialism.

### **Trade Unions**

Trade Unions, fighting the same old battles over and over again offer no way out of the dead-end of capitalism. There is nothing the unions can do which will substantially alter the way capitalism works.

**Trade Unions (SPGB Pamphlet, 1980)**

## US TERRORISM

In one of life's bitter ironies, George Bush asked the terrorist, Henry Kissinger, to investigate the events surrounding September 11. Kissinger not only helped set up the coup in Chile in the 1970's, he ordered the illegal B-52 bombing in Cambodia, sanctioned assassinations of foreign politicians the US did not like and was knee deep in the bloodletting in East Timor. Kissinger, according to Christopher Hitchens (**The Trial of Henry Kissinger**, 2001) avoids certain countries for fear of being arrested for war crimes.

Not that George Bush avoids acts of terrorism. In early November a hell-fire missile launched by the CIA from an unmanned drone killed an alleged senior al-Qua'ida official and his five companions. There was no investigation. US politicians could not care less whether they were innocent or not. Tony Blair said nothing. The so-called rule of law only applies when the capitalist state wants it to. Bush decided to be judge, jury and executioner. In this Bush adopted the methods of Josef Stalin, Enver Hoxha and Saddam Hussein.

Consider the reaction of the US president if the British government had carried out a similar terrorist act in Northern Ireland during "*the troubles*". Many New Yorkers who railed against terrorism when applied to the US would be queuing up to contribute to the funds of the IRA. This hypocrisy only demonstrates once again that one country's terrorist is another country's freedom fighter.

Individual and state terrorism feed off each other but their cause lies in a divided world of competitive nation states. Capitalism causes terrorism. Only with the abolition of capitalism can terrorism be stopped.

## A SPANNER IN THE WORKS

The Socialist Party of Great Britain have recently been sent numerous e-mails relating to the Clapham Party's acrimonious quarrel with one of their members, Robin Cox, as to whether or not those holding religious beliefs should be allowed to join a Socialist party.

Why the internal dispute over religion? The reason is simple. Over the years anarchists and reformers have joined their organisation attracted by the Party's Object, but rejecting some or all of the Principles. Following the expulsion of Camden and North West London in 1991 it has become a Party largely made up of social reformers, anarchists and by those who used the Party to further their academic careers. Many of its members left in disagreement to enter the black hole of anarchism.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain was founded by working men and women well versed in the writings of Marx and Engels, particularly their view on religion. The incompatibility of Marxism with religion should be clear to anyone who is familiar with the writings of Marx and Engels. Here is Marx right at the beginning of his political life as a revolutionary Socialist:

*"Man makes religion, religion does not make man ... Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness."* (Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's philosophy of Right from **On Religion**. 1955, Moscow)

In the **Communist Manifesto** Marx and Engels wrote:

*"... Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion ..."*



Marx went on to argue that:

*"... the religious world is but a reflex of the real world" (Capital, Volume I, Moscow 1967).*

And Engels made the comment:

*"... All religion ... is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces" (Anti-Duhring, 1878).*

And concluded:

*"Tradition is a great retarding force, is the 'vis inertia' of history, but, being merely passive, is sure to be broken down; and thus religion will be no lasting safeguard to capitalist society" (Introduction to the English edition of **Socialism: Utopian and Scientific**, 1892).*

The original members of the SPGB were Marxists in that they accepted the materialist conception of history, the labour theory of value and the political concept of the class struggle. They assumed that no one with religious beliefs would want to waste their time joining an organisation implacably hostile to religion.

Throughout their writings Marx and Engels made a distinction between materialism and idealism. They rejected idealism (which includes religion) as false consciousness but they also rejected the mechanical materialism of the French and British philosophers like Diderot and Hobbes. Thinking and being were interrelated but this did not mean that thought had some privileged access to a mythical domain of supernatural existence.

The materialist position, accepted by the Party, was set out by Engels in his pamphlet "**Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy**". In the fourth section Engels deliberates on the subject of religion. He sees religion as "*a great conservative force*" (p59). The SPGB has also shown religion to be a tyranny (see **Socialist Studies No. 45**).

Robin Cox used the negative and derogatory word "*metaphysics*" to describe a materialist conception of nature. However, all religion has at its heart a metaphysical dualism: an ideal or supernatural world over a material world. For the idealism, which Marx and Engels both attacked, there is always a higher, more real, non-material world, which is prior to the world in which we live and to which our world is subject. For a materialist there is only one world the one we inhabit as real men and women.

The simple reason why those who hold religious beliefs are not allowed into the Party is that religion, as Engels noted, is a deeply conservative force. Religion is "*timeless*", based on theological authority and leadership, it imprisons thought within empty abstractions like "*the brotherhood of man*", "*truth*" and "*universal love*"; it is a-historical, supernatural, superstitious and anti-human. Religion preserves illusions, preventing men and women from seeing their true condition, and that the social and natural world is what men and women make of it.

Cox and the Clapham Socialist Party deserve each other. The violent disagreement on this religious issue throughout their organisation shows that their Party is not a harmonious and benign organisation. Cox is now in a long line of ex-Clapham members who should never have been allowed to join the Party in the first place. Cox has stated that now he has left Clapham a new group will be formed, presumably with himself taking the role of leading revisionist, a Bernstein for the 21st century.

## 100 YEARS OF SOCIALIST IDEAS

Like Marx, the SPGB expect and hope for members of the working class to approach Socialist ideas with a thoughtful frame of mind and to be willing to learn something. The vast majority of the working class never come across Socialist ideas and those that do are often prejudiced because they think that capitalism is eternal. Our ideas do not get a fair hearing.

There is a growing disillusion with politics generally. Even the mainstream political parties no longer have any real ideals; they only change their policies to try to attract voters. There is a prevailing cynicism in society which reflects the competitive nature of capitalism.

Most workers are ignorant even of what capitalism is and how it works and this rolls over into their attitudes towards Socialist ideas if and when they hear them, live, for example the "*lazy man*" type of argument.

Putting the Party's case has never been easy, and it requires a patient methodical approach. We always have to return to basics, unlike capitalism's supporters who are always dominated by one "*issue*" or another which has to have an instant solution. If it's not banning fox hunting then it's whether or not to join the Euro. The agenda is very much set by the supporters of capitalism and its media. Nationalisation periodically re-surfaces, like with the railways and energy.

Although the world has changed a great deal in the last 100 years and continues to change, the Party's basic ideas have remained the same. Is it fair to say that the Party has its head in the sand because of this? No!

The Party has kept its basic ideas because the basis of capitalism is the same now as it was then. Our task is the slow and laborious one of educating the working class.

You cannot consider Socialist ideas unless you are aware of capitalism. To talk of a moneyless, wage-less, classless society, without explaining the nature of capitalism, the private property society of today, is a disjointed and useless way to approach the subject.

To talk of common ownership and democratic control without knowing what is to be commonly owned and the democratically controlled, and what Socialism will replace is to put the cart before the horse.

The case for Socialism is simple: the working class who today produce all of society's wealth but who only take part of that wealth as wages, must do away with private property society, and become the owners of the means of production and distribution, so that these can be used for the benefit of all of society and not just a privileged minority class - the capitalist class. In so doing they will do away with all classes because all members of Socialist society will have a common economic interest.

However although the basic case for Socialism is simple and profound, the way to explain and propagate this case is far from easy. It was not easy when the SPGB was founded and it is not easy now. We are competing against an ideology which is well dug into the prevailing mind set.

Our ideas are so big and far reaching that they are seen as ridiculous by the man on the Clapham omnibus who is probably more worried about his mortgage or who is going to win the league than he is about changing the society he lives in.

How do we make Socialist ideas more palatable? By understanding first of all what is going on now better than our critics, by being able to explain that this has not always been so and showing the transitory nature of capitalism. This is not the final and highest stage of society, though that is what the prevailing ideas of capitalism would have us think.



The basic case of the SPGB has not changed in the last 99 years. Obviously the world has changed in many ways and is continuing to change at a fantastic pace. Are we being unrealistic in our views? Given the choice of changing the world for the better or going to a rock concert, the current attitude of the workers is clear. From the response of the working class to the free rock n' roll parties last summer at Buckingham Palace to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee compared with the free entry (forget the collections) at SPGB meetings it would appear that we are indeed being unrealistic. But then even Labour Cabinet members don't always get a lot of people turning up for their meetings.

The general election in 2000 saw the lowest turnout ever of the electorate, so it is not just Socialist ideas that put people off, it is disillusion with politics altogether, and a cynical outlook on the world. An attitude engendered by the dog eat dog nature of capitalism itself. The big Labour majority in the last two elections was more to do with getting the Tories out and keeping them out than a positive attitude to change.

The leader of the Welsh Nationalist Party recently described Tony Blair as a very good Tory, which of course he is. Whichever party gets into power has the job of running the national capitalism in the interests of the national capitalist class, so for all the politicians' bluster and posturing, they all end up doing more or less the same things. Modern politics seems to be more about differences of emphasis than about any real change. When the most impassioned debate in Parliament is about banning hunting with dogs, whilst millions of people throughout the world are in dire poverty, unemployed, suffering disease, hunger and warfare, shows the shallowness of the capitalist supporting politicians.

They have no real ideas about changing the world; they have no desire to do so. They can only accept the existence of capitalism as if it were ordained from on high, and tinker about with the legislative machinery hopefully so as to allow capitalism to run more efficiently.

The last thing these supporters of capitalism want is for the working class to spot the open gate leading to emancipation, and go through it. From their point of view it is better to outrage the feelings of the workers about the cruelty to animals caused by hunting them than it is to explain the cruelty and unhappiness caused by the capitalist system to most of its subjects.

Whilst the world has changed vastly since the Party was formed, and is continuing to change at a fantastic pace, the one thing that has not changed is the relationship of wage labour and capital. This fundamental social relation arises because a minority of the population, the capitalists, own and control the means of living. Shakespeare wrote something along the lines of "*he owns my life who owns the means whereby I live*". Those who do not own the means of life must work for those that do.

However wealthy or relatively well paid the workers are today compared with when the Party was formed, they still have to work for wages or salaries on their masters' behalf. Their lives are still owned by their employers because their masters own the means of production and distribution. In the recent film, *Gosford Park* there is a line said by the character played by Helen Mirren, who, when asked about the effect of something on her life replied "*Life? I have no life. I am a servant*".

There, if you have it, is the essence of the Socialist idea. It is about time that the servants took over control of society and thereby their own lives. Incidentally, the film was about a weekend pheasant shooting party at a millionaire's house in the 1930's and the dogs were only used to retrieve the dead birds. The English ruling class were obviously very progressive then!

However, the Labour government's obsession not to be seen as condoning cruelty to animals is backfiring on them when it comes to medical research, and experiments carried out on animals. They mustn't be seen as anti-progressive when it comes to scientific research, especially that which

may benefit capitalism and yet, at the same time, they don't want to upset animal loving voters. The Huntingdon Life Sciences laboratory, the scene of many anti-vivisection demonstrations, is now owned by an American company, but still has British shareholders who are targeted by organisations like the Animal Liberation Front. The Labour government protects these class interests at all costs.

As long as one small section of society owns and controls the means of producing social wealth so long will the majority of society, the workers, have to continue to labour on their behalf, and receive in return only a part of what they left behind at the work place, in the form of wages. However high or low these wages, the wage labour and capital relationship is unchanged. No amount of arguments about cruelty to animals will hide this fact.

With the collapse of the Soviet Empire and state capitalism, with the resultant victory of the type of capitalism found in the west, in a way our task has been made easier, for those with time to reason with it. Since 1917 the SPGB argued that there never was any Socialism in Russia and that the events marked the overthrow of feudal relationships, there and the proper establishment of capitalism, albeit state capitalism where the state owned the various industries. There was never any common ownership in Russia, and the workers there have continued to work for wages and be exploited and no more own the means of production than do American workers.

The Left Wing idea that the workers would get worse and worse off in time has been largely proved wrong by events. Although there are now far many more workers than there were. Compared with the conditions of 1904 these workers are undoubtedly better off than their predecessors when the Party was formed, who lived miserable lives.

The idea that increasing use of machinery, thus displacing labour, would increase the unemployment of the working-class has been largely counteracted



by the general expansion of the capitalist system. Whatever else capitalism is, it is dynamic, never resting, always seeking to expand. The quest for profit must never rest. Those who rely on increasing automation and thus mass unemployment and working-class discontent to spill over into revolution for capitalism to collapse will have a very long wait. The establishment of Socialism will have to be a conscious political decision taken by the majority of the working class using the parliamentary method to gain control of the machinery of government.

Whilst Marx and the early Party were over-optimistic in expecting a rapid conversion to Socialist ideas, nevertheless we will agree with Marx that capitalism produces its own gravediggers. As capitalist production becomes more and more technically advanced it requires workers who are better educated. It cannot rely on mindless automatons, not that it ever could.

According to research carried out by the ESRC research centre based at Oxford University, the percentage of jobs requiring computer skills rose from 31% to 40% between 1997 and 2001. Nearly 75% of jobs involved some use of computers.

The nature of the skills required may have changed since the Party was formed, but the increasing sophistication of the productive process has made an "educated" working class more and more essential. As long as this "education" can be kept to technical levels then capitalism is secure. But should the inventive minds required to keep up the technical progress ever stray from GM foods to changing society, then indeed the capitalists will have a battle on their hands!

In this sense the gravediggers of capitalism are well in place but need to be primed with the Socialist idea. As long as workers are content not to think about the society they live in, so long capitalism will continue, labour-saving machinery or not. There will be no collapse of capitalism, only a Socialist revolution will end the profit system.

To return to the earlier question: what is the best way to put our case in a convincing manner? Slowly and methodically, with the facts and reason behind us. We must hope that there are receptive and listening grave diggers out there!



## ARGENTINA: DROWNING IN TEARS

The recent devaluation of the Argentinean Peso showed how much confusion there is in the minds of government ministers and their economic advisors.

Apart from the fact that devaluation, as anyone could have foreseen, produced in Argentina a big increase of profits for exporting companies, 2002 was just like 2001 - crises, government attempts to keep wages down and the struggle by workers to maintain wage rates as best they can under unfavourable economic conditions.

By the end of the year the BBC News (28 November 2002) carried a report of children dying as the medical structure collapsed, while in the slums around the main cities, children were literally starving. And this was once one of the richest countries in the world.

The devaluation of currencies raises the issue of money itself. The current orthodoxy among economists is to define money as currency (notes and coins) plus the money on current account. In the past other economists have treated money in a much more limited sense, notes and coins, which the last official committee on the question, the Radcliffe Committee, in its Report in 1959 airily dismissed as only "*the small change of the monetary system*".

In the 18th century the dominant theory was the Quantity Theory of Money which was largely accepted until the 1930's. This too has its advocates although there have been many different theories under the same name, differing from each other in how they defined money. One of the earliest held that the price level is raised or lowered according to whether there is a large or small amount of precious metal in the country. (This was dealt with by Marx in **Capital, Vol I**, p139, in the Kerr edition.)

Other quantity theories have been based on notes and coin; on those plus bank deposits on current account.

Few if any economists make reference to Marx's study of the subject. Marx did however supply the missing link. He showed that gold functions as the money commodity, the universal equivalent, for all other commodities because, like them, gold is an embodiment of value, the socially necessary labourtime required to produce it.

When a certain quantity of gold in the form of coins functioned as money in this way, to meet market needs corresponding to a given volume of production and a given velocity and volume of buying and selling transactions, it represented a total quantity of value.

Marx showed that if gold coin is replaced by inconvertible paper money and if the issue of paper money is increased, the result is a corresponding rise of the price level, in addition to any other factors pushing prices up.

The crux of the matter is that if the notes in circulation are doubled they still represent only the same total amount of value, so that each note represents only half the value represented by each note before the doubling took place. It now takes two notes to buy what formerly one note would buy: prices are doubled.

Unlike other theories, Marx's explanation does in fact explain inflation and the big increase of the general price level from after the Second World War. And this is the answer to the economists (including Keynes) who dismiss Marx as of no account.

The reappearance of quantity theories of money during the last thirty years marks the growing disillusionment about Keynes and his theories.

However, whatever theory is in vogue amongst policy makers, the bankers and politicians, capitalism can never be made to work in the interest of all society. All economic theories that come into being, are temporarily turned into economic policy and then fail. This applies whether it is the Quantity Theo

of Money, economic liberalism, Islamic economics, feminist economics, Keynesianism, Monetarism and any other "ism" which comes out of the universities.

This is a lesson now being learnt by workers in Japan where every economic policy known to economists has been tried in vain. Now the same lesson is being learnt in Argentina: capitalism is anarchic and cannot be run in the interests of all society. Marx could only draw one conclusion from his own study of capitalism: that is for the working class to consciously and politically organise to abolish the anarchy of capitalism and the exploitation of the wages system and establish Socialism.

#### **Socialism and the Question of Reforms**

The SPGB will not barter its independence for promises of reform. For, no matter whether these promises are made sincerely or not, we know that the immediate need of our class is emancipation, which can only be achieved through the establishment of Socialism. The workers' interests under capitalism are opposed to the interests of all sections of the capitalist class. Whether bankers or industrialists, landlords or commercial magnates, all capitalists participate in the fruits of exploitation.



## TONY BENN AND THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

Mr Benn made his contribution to the Tawney Memorial lectures on behalf of the so-called Christian Socialist Movement in 1988. It has two parallel themes: the religious and the political. The sterility of the one is complemented by the emptiness of the other.

To establish Mr Benn's eminence, CSM records that since 1950 he has been elected 13 times to the House of Commons - always on the Labour Party programme committed to reforming capitalism - never betraying any inkling that he knew or cared the first thing about Socialism. During his membership of Wilson's Labour governments (1964-79) in which he served as Postmaster-General, Minister of Technology and Minister of Power, the build up of British nuclear weapons and delivery systems was taking place. Is this to be regarded as part of The Moral Basis of the Radical Left? (the title of his lecture).

Tawney accepted that Christianity (in common with other world religions) had adapted in order to survive the revolutionary changes from feudalism to capitalism. In the process, what happened to the word of god "*that liveth and abideth for ever*"? Marx's remark that: "*The English established church, ..... will more readily pardon an attack on 38 of its 39 articles than on 1/39 of its income*" holds true for all property-owning religion. Christianity has, of necessity, nevertheless dragged its basic fairy tales through the 20th and into the 21st centuries. Immaculate conception, virgin birth, the immortal soul, the efficacy of prayer, pie in the sky and the three-in-one deity father, son and holy ghost.

In 1988 Mr Benn discovered what he regards as " ... *the inherent defects of capitalism*". This is in the context of claiming that: "*Political argument in Britain today is becoming more fundamental*". As the old "*consensus break*



down" he sees the dissolving of *"the modest welfare society which has been established, and eroding liberalism itself"*. Fourteen years later political argument and the biggest demonstration in modern time centred around the *"fundamental"* issue of fox-hunting. Other issues of political argument are education, crime, poverty, pensions and wars. These have been constants for generations with reformists seeking to modify capitalism. Far from the welfare state *"dissolving"*, it remains the biggest single area of government expenditure. The fact that poverty continues shows that welfare reformism is no answer.

Just what the *"liberalism"* was that Mr Benn saw being eroded is difficult to deduce. The capitalist class and their political agents own and control the television, radio, press and the schools. Minority views, and in particular the case for Socialism, have no expression outside the meagre resources of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and the works of a few writers such as Marx and Engels, which are belittled and distorted by the mass media.

Wrong on every point so far, Mr Benn just gets worse. We quote his next paragraph to show he does not mean by Socialism what is properly to be understood by the term.

*"Never has democratic socialism been more necessary, but never has its struggle to assert itself been more difficult; first because it is constantly and maliciously misrepresented by a mass media which increasingly acts as a propaganda machine rather than an information service and, secondly, because it suffers from the experience of Labourism under successive Labour governments since the second world war, which often was not Socialism, even though it was presented as such both by its advocates and its opponents. The price we have paid for failing to establish even a base for Socialism over the last 30 years is that a renewed and most virulent strain of capitalism is now in the ascendancy"*.

Thirty years would have taken Mr Benn back to 1958, just about when he became a Member of the Labour Party's NEC and not long before he took a series of Cabinet posts in successive Labour governments. Through all those years Mr Benn was part of the problem, helping to pass off Nationalisation as Socialism - malicious misrepresentation indeed! When he refers to Labour governments "*which often (were) not Socialism*", this clearly implies that they sometimes were. This shows he knows nothing about Socialism. These Labour administrations of capitalism were never presented as anything else by the SPGB. Throughout the whole post-war period we published pamphlets and countless articles attacking Labourism and Nationalisation, which Mr Benn never troubled to read. We also held thousands of meetings arguing the case for Socialism, which he was too busy running capitalism to attend.

Benn, having referred to the Labour Party's "*long neglect of Socialism*", without saying why he is still a member of that party and, with sublime indifference to the fact that Labour has, from the start, been a reformist party of capitalism which has only ever paid lip-service to its own distortions of Socialism, turns to R H Tawney whose writings he regards as Socialist and claims that there are "*none greater*".

As an example of Tawney's "*Socialist*" writing, Benn quotes him posing the question: "*Who is to be master?*" - a relative few "*... bankers, industrialists and landowners?*" and answering, or shall we create organs to "*override, for the sake of economic efficiency, the obstruction of vested interest; and distribute the product of its labours in accordance with some generally recognised principles of justice?*"

Since the last work referred to by Tawney was published in 1931 and the billionaire bankers, industrialists and landowners are as powerful as ever, and still on the backs of the working class after eight Labour governments, this nebulous nonsense should be treated with the contempt it deserves.

Tawney was four times a Labour parliamentary candidate, so it was not for the want of trying that he failed to take part in running capitalism. He was president of the so-called Socialist Christian League which merged with the Society of Socialist Clergy and Ministers to form the Christian Socialist Movement in 1960. The claim of any of these groupings to be Socialist is utterly bogus. Mr Benn claims that Tawney urged the "*transfer of economic power to public hands*". This is nothing but a plea for nationalisation. Socialism has nothing to do with merely transferring economic power, but means its abolition. The Communist Manifesto of 1848 by Marx and Engels makes clear that when the working class ends the power of the capitalist class by making the means of production common property it will be the political act by which all classes will be abolished. Mr Benn sees Tawney's '*public power*' nonsense as appealing to those inside the Labour Party who are "*... calling for Socialism in place of the weak and woolly liberalism which has so deeply penetrated Labour policies during the last 30 years*". Again, those same 30 years when he had been most influential inside Labour governments.

Vagueness is Mr Benn's great ally. It enables him to refer to "*... the ethical values of Christianity and the economic analysis of Socialism ...*" and to see them in "*... a new line-up*", without saying what he means by either. That the economic analysis of Socialism involves the abolition of the wages-system in the revolutionary process of ending class society as a democratic political act of the workers themselves is not understood by Mr Benn.

A glimpse of what he regards as Christian ethics is shown where he refers to South Africa and sees the churches and the labour movement as "*... major defenders of the oppressed*". Workers (black and white) are oppressed because as employees they are exploited by the class that owns the means of production. "*Defending*" the oppressed only perpetuates oppression which is inseparable from capitalism. The workers must fight their own class battles industrially and politically, and not rely upon the "*ethics*" of parsons. Benn goes on to argue that in Latin America "*... the libertarian theologians who are*



*Catholics and Marxists who are uniting against the dictatorship of the military dictators defending American and domestic capitalist exploitation". Catholic libertarian theologians, whose brains are chained to the Vatican, are part of the oldest, continuous dictatorship in the world. The Marxist position is that American workers, including more than 60 million Catholics, need to be liberated from this religious mental enslavement and, together with their fellow workers - both in Latin America and world-wide end exploitation by ending capitalism.*

Another Benn irony is that he criticises the worship of money; this he thinks goes against the moral values taught by centuries of Christianity. He does not notice the wealth accumulated by the churches in centuries of Christianity. It is moral for workers to be poor and for the churches to be wealthy!

Even where Mr Benn stumbles upon some thought-provoking points that are worth making he uses them to lead to unwarranted conclusions.

He compares Britain's hereditary monarchy and the House of Lords based on heredity and patronage unfavourably with America, where the President, Senate, the House of Representatives, the state governors and some judges are all elected. In view of his remarks about the power of money, Mr Benn should have noticed that the two major American parties spend many millions of dollars subscribed by companies like Enron, and that American politicians are paid for by the capitalist class they represent. The need to dazzle the working class with promises and glib reformist leaders is common not only to British and American capitalism, but to the entire capitalist world. Mr Benn argues that the House of Commons is virtually confined to an observer role because the powers of a medieval monarch are now exercised: "*... by a Prime Minister who is an elected dictator and has become the real fount of honour and patronage which corrupts the democratic process*".

It is reasonable to ask at what point in his long parliamentary and ministerial



career did Mr Benn first see these things? That the power structures of capitalism are remote from the workers is true and, as Tweedle-dum replaces Tweedle-dee, the power continuity is effectively dictatorial; but what corrupts the "democratic process" is not patronage, it is political ignorance. This is what perpetuates capitalism, and what Socialist understanding will end.

Mr Benn makes the sound point that: *"In truth Britain is still a very primitive society and is class-ridden from top to bottom"*. He does not understand class to mean wage-workers (employees) and capitalist owners of the means of production (employers). His unwarranted conclusion is:

*"For it must be obvious to any serious Socialist that you cannot create a new society by trying to use the institutions established by another class for another purpose in another period of history"*. This is a hopelessly flawed argument. He goes on to argue that Labour's assumption that the state is "neutral" and "can be used to serve us" is not sound and he sees the need *"... for major reforms in the structure of the state"*. If this is not using the established institutions what is? What "major reforms" he has in mind he does not say, but that the "structure of the state" will remain is obvious. His assertion that the Labour Party is interested in taking charge of the state "to serve us" is the pivot of his fallacy, unless the "us" he has in mind is the capitalist class. It is precisely the fact that the Labour party only seeks a mandate to run capitalism on votes from non-Socialists that ensures that the state continues to function on behalf of the capitalist class.

To say that the institutions developed to serve capitalism cannot be used to overthrow it is sheer nonsense. If true, this would confer upon capitalism the mantle of eternal existence; reformism and industrial action, etc are institutions or forms of organisation developed by capitalism. The votes of non-Socialists are not aimed at stripping the capitalists of their ownership of the means of production. When a majority of workers become Socialists the powers of the state will be *"... converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of*

*emancipation ...*". The vital distinction being a conscious, democratic majority commitment to change and the withdrawal of support for capitalism.

Nothing Mr Benn says promotes the understanding of Socialism. He pontificates about justice, peace and equality being "*implanted in the human soul*" but does not advance his appeal to the working class beyond Christian mythology and the Labour Party.

### Not in the Core Curriculum

In an unprecedented display of anti-war feeling, many schoolchildren rejected the bland platitudes of the Citizenship core curriculum that they are forced to attend. Instead they demonstrated against the war by sit-ins and demonstrations. The media and politicians, who up to now, had despaired at the political apathy of the young, would surely have been pleased by this political engagement. They were not. They censured the schoolchildren for truancy and teachers wrote letters of complaint to parents. The message about "*citizenship*" is clear. The politicians only want an obedient electorate who will rubber stamp them into power every five years. They do not want voters who can think for themselves and act in their own interests. Socialists on the other hand do want workers to act in their interests. However, just demonstrating against another capitalist war is not enough. Nevertheless, it is a beginning that might lead to political maturity: an understanding that the cause of today's social problems is capitalism and that while capitalism lasts these problems will remain. You will not find this political lesson in Citizenship text books nor from politicians busy finishing off this war while planning the next.

## **The New Rulers of the World**

*"A report by the United Nations' Security General in October 2001 says that the obstruction of \$4 billion of humanitarian supplies by the US and British governments is by far the main cause of the extreme suffering and deaths in Iraq ... UNICEF says that every month up to 6,000 children die most as a result of the blockade. This is twice the total number of deaths in the Twin Towers and another vivid reminder of the different value of different lives" (The New Rulers of the World, John Pilger, p8).*

*"With its 100 million people and its 300 mile arc of islands containing the richest hoard of natural resources, Indonesia is the greatest prize in South-East-Asia" (Richard Nixon, 1967, John Pilger, ibid p15)*

Marshall Green (US Ambassador in Jakarta, (mid-1960's) told General Suharto: *"The US is generally sympathetic with and admiring of what the army is doing"*. The State Department's Indonesia expert, Howard Federspill, in 1965 said *"No one cared, as long as they were communists that they were being butchered"* (ibid p31). Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt on a visit to the US said *"With 500,000 to a million communist sympathisers knocked off, I think it's safe to assume a reorientation has taken place"* (ibid, p33). *"On the island of Bali; the "reorientation" described by Prime Minister Hold meant the violent deaths of at least 80,000 people ..."* (John Pilger, ibid, p34).

*"... the British Defence Secretary, Geoffrey Hoon, told Parliament: "The use of cluster bombs (in Afghanistan) is entirely appropriate. Against certain targets they are the best and most effective weapons we have" (ibid. p99). This was thirty years after 1972 when they were dropped on Laos, where today: "...they continue to kill and maim an estimated 20,000 people a year in Laos, a tiny country never at war with America, which was bombed as a sideshow to the destruction of Vietnam and Cambodia" (ibid, p101).*

## SOCIALISTS IN THE UKRAINE

Since April 2002, we have had considerable correspondence via e-mails with SOCIALIST ENLIGHTENMENT (UKRAINE), a socialist group which consists of some 20 members. This group with members in Kiev and Kharkov had been members of the Novikov group, which later became the World Socialist Party of Ukraine, recognised by the Clapham Socialist Party. The Socialist Enlightenment Group broke away, disturbed by the lack of democracy in that group, the leadership role that developed and their disagreement with some of the propaganda emanating from Clapham.

After they logged on to our web site and contacted us, expressing full agreement with our Object and Declaration of Principles, we were invited to attend a conference in Kiev to meet their members and discuss future co-operation. Two of our members went to this Conference over 21st and 22nd September, being warmly welcomed and shown cordial hospitality.

Lengthy discussions took place on many fundamentals of the socialist case, including democratic organisation; opposition to other parties; vanguardism and leadership; opposition to war; Marxian economics etc. There were long sessions of questions and answers from both sides on a wide range of topics. The outcome was a recommendation by our members that the group is fully committed to the 1904 Principles and Policy, and is one which we should recognise. We intend to seek practical means to co-operate with them, whilst appreciating the different and difficult conditions in which they operate.

They have translated a number of our pamphlets into their own language and we left with them some 10 audio tapes from our lecture series. Overall, the visit was well worth while and as time passes we shall hopefully make further progress reports.

General Secretary.



## Соціалізм в Україні.

З квітня 2002-го року ми мали інтенсивне листування через електронну пошту з Соціалістичною Просвітою (Україна), соціалістичною групою, що налічує близько 20-ти членів. Ця група має членів у Києві та Харкові, була раніше у складі групи Новикова, визнаною Клепхемською Соціалістичною Партією. Соціалістична Просвіта відокремилася, стурбована відсутністю демократії в цієї групи, створеною роллю керівництва та їх незгодою деякими пропагандистськими матеріалами, запропонованими Клепхемом.

Після того, як вони увійшли на наш веб-сайт та контактували з нами, виражаючи повну згоду з нашою Метою та Декларацією Принципів, ми були запрошені на Конференцію в Київ зустрітися з їх членами та обговорити подальшу співпрацю. Два наші члени поїхали на Конференцію 21-го та 22-го вересня, були тепло та гостинно зустрінуті.

Мала місце тривала дискусія по багатьох фундаментальних аспектах соціалізму, в тому числі демократичній організації, опозиції іншим партіям, авангардизму та керівництву, опозиції війні, Марксистській економіці і т.п. Була довга сесія запитань та відповідей з обох сторін по широкому колу тем. Результатом був висновок з боку наших членів, що група цілком стоїть на Принципах та Політиці 1904-го року та, як така, повинна бути визнана нами. Ми намагаємося знайти практичні методи співробітництва з ними, визнаючи у той же час різні та важкі умови, за яких вони діють.

Вони переклали ряд наших памфлетів на їх мову, та ми лишили їм 10 аудіокасет з серією наших лекцій. Як висновок, візит був успішним, але з плином часу ми повинні мати прогрес у наших звітах.

Генеральний Секретар

## **SOCIALIST ACTIVITY AT THE ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATIONS.**

At the last 2 demonstrations in London we were able to have our literature stand in a prominent place on the Embankment, where members distributed a new leaflet and sold our pamphlets, concentrating on the two dealing with War and Terrorism. For the first demonstration we split our meagre forces and also covered the Gower Street venue. Three members were also able to give out leaflets and sell literature at a recent all-day Conference in Central Hall Westminster, where rain and cold winds made things difficult. Our total sales on these 3 occasions came to the record figure of £325, and this with just 6 members who were available. In Glasgow, a lone member also gave out leaflets and sold £7 of pamphlets.

The Socialist opposition to War, based on the class struggle was made available to hundreds of people, amidst the flood of suggestions for opposing and stopping the war. The following caught our eye. Arthur Scargill and his Socialist Labour Party called on people to stay away from work every Wednesday to stop the war starting, whilst the Clapham based Socialist Party said ... "We pledge to do all in our power to bring the slaughter to an immediate end". Perhaps they should tell Bush and Blair what they have in mind to fulfil this pledge.

## **SUMMER SCHOOL - SUNDAY 15th JUNE 2003**

A warm welcome awaits you at our 12th Summer School. We have chosen a subject that deals with many fundamentals of the Socialist case, but is also wide enough to touch upon various problems, such as War etc that are a constant feature of Capitalism. Our Summer Schools not only provide some good lectures and discussion, but also social occasions. It would be good to see you there.

### **" IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE TO CAPITALISM ? "**

#### **FIRST SESSION**

12 Noon

Capitalism as a historical  
world-wide system: it's beginning and future.

1,30 - 2.30 p.m. Light Buffet Luncheon

#### **SECOND SESSION**

2.30 p.m.

Denying history. Will capitalism last forever ?

**MARCHMONT COMMUNITY CENTRE**

62 Marchmont Street, London WC1  
(5 mins. Russell Square Tube Station)

**Free Admission, Question and Discussion periods.**

# THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

## OBJECT

*The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.*

## DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
  2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
  3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
  4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
  5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
  6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
- That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
- The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

ALL ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP TO...

The Socialist Party of Great Britain.

71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB

email [enquiries@spgb.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@spgb.org.uk)

www.spgb.org.uk



## **SOCIALIST ACTIVITY AT THE ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATIONS.**

At the last 2 demonstrations in London we were able to have our literature stand in a prominent place on the Embankment, where members distributed a new leaflet and sold our pamphlets, concentrating on the two dealing with War and Terrorism. For the first demonstration we split our meagre forces and also covered the Gower Street venue. Three members were also able to give out leaflets and sell literature at a recent all-day Conference in Central Hall Westminster, where rain and cold winds made things difficult. Our total sales on these 3 occasions came to the record figure of £325, and this with just 6 members who were available. In Glasgow, a lone member also gave out leaflets and sold £7 of pamphlets.

The Socialist opposition to War, based on the class struggle was made available to hundreds of people, amidst the flood of suggestions for opposing and stopping the war. The following caught our eye. Arthur Scargill and his Socialist Labour Party called on people to stay away from work every Wednesday to stop the war starting, whilst the Clapham based Socialist Party said ... "We pledge to do all in our power to bring the slaughter to an immediate end". Perhaps they should tell Bush and Blair what they have in mind to fulfil this pledge.

## **SUMMER SCHOOL - SUNDAY 15th JUNE 2003**

A warm welcome awaits you at our 12th Summer School. We have chosen a subject that deals with many fundamentals of the Socialist case, but is also wide enough to touch upon various problems, such as War etc that are a constant feature of Capitalism. Our Summer Schools not only provide some good lectures and discussion, but also social occasions. It would be good to see you there.

### **" IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE TO CAPITALISM ? "**

#### **FIRST SESSION**

12 Noon

Capitalism as a historical world-wide system: it's beginning and future.

1.30 - 2.30 p.m. Light Buffet Luncheon

#### **SECOND SESSION**

2.30 p.m.

Denying history. Will capitalism last forever ?

**MARCHMONT COMMUNITY CENTRE**

62 Marchmont Street, London WC1  
(5 mins. Russell Square Tube Station)

**Free Admission, Question and Discussion periods.**



# THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

## OBJECT

*The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.*

## DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain therefore enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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